

# First Glance

*February 2021*

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## Lent at First United

### Lenten Theme:

#### Soul Space, Deep Breaths, Stories Not Easily Told

As we continue to live through the challenges of the winter of 2021 and as we mark the one-year anniversary since physical distancing limited our ability to gather in-person, we join in our annual Lenten journey.

Lent invites us to reflect on our spirit well-being, creating space for both nurturing and stretching our spirit-bodies. We take time to tenderly care for our souls through caring spirit practices even as we respond to the holy invitation to be deepened and stretched in our faith journey.

So, we invite you to join us for our journey through the five Sundays of Lent (February 21 to March 21) where we explore our theme of ***Soul Space, Deep Breaths, Stories Not Easily Told***, a journey which will culminate in a special ***Palm/Passion Pageant*** on Sunday March 28<sup>th</sup>.

### Lenten Beginning:

#### Ash Wednesday Service

We will be joining together with Trinity United Church for an Ash Wednesday Zoom Gathering that will draw us into the experience of Lent

### Lenten Learning:

#### Invitation to participate in a 4-week documentary and discussion series on issues of race in Canada

Many in our faith community have been engaging in discussions about race and racism in Canada since late last year. These discussions have led to the development of a 4-week documentary and discussion series as we reflect on our individual and collective experiences and where we feel called as a community to act.

You are invited to participate in any or all of our four, mid-week, evening gatherings where we will watch a documentary on an aspect of race or racism in Canada, engage in small group discussion, and then together discuss what steps we can take as a faith community to address racism within our faith community and society at large. One of the four gatherings will be scheduled during the early afternoon following a Sunday service, and will involve a documentary geared toward younger audiences and involve an intergenerational discussion.

Details of the films, and how to register for the study will be circulated, but please mark your calendars for 90-minutes on **Wednesday at 7pm on March 3rd, 10th, 24th** and **Sunday, March 21st at 12:30pm**.

## Updates From Church Council

### Report from On-Line Survey

Thank you to everyone who completed the on-line survey to provide Church Council feedback on congregational life during this season of Covid-19. We had 75 responses, responses that offered helpful suggestions, programming possibilities, constructive criticisms, and general input. All the comments have been carefully reviewed, and Council and staff are responding and implementing accordingly.

For your information, here is the statistical response to the inquiry about how the church has facilitated modifications to church activities and Sunday services during Covid-19

Very Satisfied	84.0%
Somewhat Satisfied	4.0%
Neutral	5.3%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	1.3%
Very Dissatisfied	5.3%

### The Annual Congregational Meeting

Church Council is planning a Zoom Annual Meeting to be held on Sunday, March 7<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Details will be circulated about the meeting, a gathering which will include opportunities for conversation as well as a review of priorities for congregational life. In addition, we will conduct the necessary congregational responsibilities such as receiving the annual report, accepting the 2020 Reviewed Financial Statements, approving the 2021 budget, and electing Church Council.

### Covid-19 Taskgroup:

Thanks is extended to the leadership of the Covid-19 taskgroup who will continue to monitor public health guidelines for the immediate future and provide direction as we prepare for in-person gatherings later in 2021.

### On-line Children/Youth Programming

Nikki Nel continues to provide on-line Children's programming. From 10:15 to 11:00 a.m., she offers a class for younger children (ages 5 to 10) and beginning at 12:15 p.m. for older children (ages 9 to 13). Please contact Nikki Nel at [nikkinelteacher@gmail.com](mailto:nikkinelteacher@gmail.com) for the Zoom link and the package of crafts and lessons that will be delivered to your home. Leaders of Rite 13 and J2A continue with on-line programming as well.

### Healing Pathway Spiritual Care Package (available on the First United website)

The Healing Pathway ministry at First United has prepared a spiritual care package. While we may not be able to meet face to face, we can connect heart to heart and be proactive in nurturing our spirits and connecting with the Divine through meditation, prayer, long walks, and reaching out safely to one another and to those who are vulnerable and isolated. **Distance Healing Pathway sessions** are available by contacting [healingpathway2010@gmail.com](mailto:healingpathway2010@gmail.com)

### Mental Health Strategies for the Winter of Covid-19 (available on the First United website)

The "Let's Talk About Mental Health" group has developed resources to support mental health through the winter of Covid-19. Please reach out for pastoral support when you need. The **Let's Talk About Mental Health** Zoom discussion is led by Jessica Ward-King and Zachary Houle and will meet on Sunday, February 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> as well as March 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> at 12:30 p.m. To register contact [j.ward-king@hotmail.com](mailto:j.ward-king@hotmail.com)

## Small Groups at First United

### Nurturing Self-Care through Energy/Spirit Practices

Sharon Moon will be leading a short on-line Zoom session to teach and demonstrate accessible self-care techniques that anyone can do. More details will be circulated about this gathering in the next few days.

Monday Evening On-line Christian Meditation, occurs at 5:30 every Monday evening on Zoom and is led by Joyce Hardman, Cathy Nobleman, and Liz Tyrwhitt. This gathering is connected with the World Community for Christian Meditation based on the leadership of Laurence Freeman. Contact Joyce at [jhardman@rogers.com](mailto:jhardman@rogers.com) to register and get more resources on Christian Meditation.

### A stitch in time (in-person gathering on Saturday's at 1:00 – presently suspended for now):

Have you been knitting or sewing in pandemic days? Have you been musing about metaphors and the symbolic nature of these activities? If you crave a chance to get together both physically present while safely distanced, you might be interested in joining with up to 6 people to share and show. If you are interested, please contact Jane Sly at [janeelizsly@gmail.com](mailto:janeelizsly@gmail.com)

### Monday Morning Living into Right Relations on-line Book Club:

For years, a book club has met to read and discuss living into right relations with the First Peoples of Canada. On Mondays, from 9:30 - 11:30 am, the group is reading "Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Issues". The group welcomes new members. To get the Zoom connection or more information, contact Cindy at [office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org](mailto:office@firstunitedchurchottawa.org)

## Important Update from the Water Allies of First United

For years, the "Water Care Allies" at First United have engaged on protecting the watershed of the Ottawa River. The Water Care Allies group at First **urgently invite us** to join many other organizations in sending a letter to the Mayor and Council to express deep concern about the huge above-ground nuclear waste mound (the size of 19 football fields, seven stories high) within a mile of the Ottawa River. ***A motion in opposition to this project is before the City Council is presently slated for Wednesday, February 24th.*** Please send a letter to Ottawa City Council about our deep concern for our river and healthy drinking water. Information was circulated by email and is available on our website.

## Invitation from United Church in Ottawa and the General Council of The United Church of Canada

### **"Racism, White Privilege and the Invention of Race"**

**A Zoom meeting Sunday, February 21 at 2:30 p.m. with Rev. Dr. Anthony Bailey.** All are welcome to join this Zoom meeting at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84170503674?pwd=aXlIZTZvMHpYNEo2ZmhaQmlWVGdsZz09>  
**Passcode: 934952**

### **Participatory Researchers in a Learning Community on Anti-Black Experiences in Canadian Churches**

The United Church of Canada is **seeking six (6) African-descent young adults (18-28 years old) who are affiliated with The United Church of Canada** to form a learning community to do participatory research. As part of this community, young adults will be trained to become resource experts on the history of anti-Black racism in Canadian church contexts. The project also includes educational engagement with communities of faith in the church. Visit <https://united-church.ca/opportunities/participatory-researchers-learning-community-anti-black-experiences-canadian-churches> for full information on this opportunity.

## Social and Ecological Justice

### **Canada, the Churches, and Bill C-15: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act**

**February 18 at 7:00 pm EST** there will be a learning event “**Canada, the Churches, and Bill C-15**” sponsored by “[Faith in the Declaration: A coalition of faith houses and organizations in support of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples legislation.](#)”

KAIROS is part of the Faith in the Declaration coalition and we warmly invite you to this conversation on why the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) legislation is important to Canadian churches. A panel of experts will describe Bill C-15, the legislation the government of Canada is introducing to implement UNDRIP, and explore the support and opposition to the Bill.

#### **Panelists:**

**Panel Moderator: Archbishop Mark MacDonald**

National Anglican Indigenous Bishop and WCC North American Vice-President

**Chief Wilton (Willie) Littlechild**

A Cree lawyer, former member of Parliament, former Grand Chief of the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations, and Commissioner to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

**Professor Sheryl Lightfoot**

Canada Research Chair in Global Indigenous Rights and Politics, UBC Associate Professor: First Nations and Indigenous Studies and Political Science

**Ellen Gabriel**

Mohawk activist and artist from Kanehsatà:ke Nation - Turtle Clan, spokesperson chosen by the People of the Longhouse during the occupation of Kanehsatà:ke (Oka Crisis)

The event will be in English with simultaneous French translation.

**To Register:** <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/canada-the-churches-bill-c-15-le-canada-les-eglises-et-le-projet-de-tickets-140299007107>

**Branch Out Theatre's BIPOC Youth Mentorship Program Call for Applicants:** Branch Out Theatre invites BIPOC youth ages 18-29 based in Toronto and Ottawa who are passionate about using theatre as a tool for social change and community arts facilitation to apply to be the first mentee in our BIPOC youth mentorship program online. This program will provide the chance to be mentored by a BIPOC Branch Out Theatre Artist in: Theatre of the Oppressed, facilitation skills and receive guidance on your community arts practice. The program will take place this spring and provides an honorarium. To apply, at [info@branchouttheatre.com](mailto:info@branchouttheatre.com)